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ABSTRACT

This survey assesses the status of homelessness among families in cities. The data were collected from city officials during April 1987. The findings include the following: (1) the number of homeless families increased by 31 percent during the last two years; (2) families represented one-third of the homeless and a single parent headed two-thirds of those families; (3) the number of families temporarily living with friends or relatives has increased; (4) the most serious problem faced by the homeless was lack of food and/or poor nutrition; (5) the major consequence of homelessness was emotional and psychiatric problems; (6) a main cause of homelessness was lack of affordable housing; (7) the number of shelter beds in the survey cities had increased over the last two years; (8) families must break up in order to be accommodated in most shelters; (9) 30 percent of the families seeking emergency shelter were turned away; (10) use of the shelters during specific times of the day and the length of stay in the shelters were limited; (11) most cities provided assistance in obtaining permanent housing and emergency food assistance; (12) low-income housing was the service most lacking; (13) the number of homeless families was expected to increase; and (14) every city cited the lack of affordable housing as a major barrier to permanently housing families in the future. Statistical tables, a copy of the survey questionnaire responses, and comments from respondents are included. (FMW)

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A STATUS REPORT ON HOMELESS FAMILIES IN AMERICA'S CITIES

A 30-CITY SURVEY

MAY, 1987

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A STATUS REPORT ON HOMELESS FAMILIES IN AMERICA'S CITIES

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MAY, 1987

UNITED STATES
CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., President
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SUMMARY

To assess the current status of homelessness among families in cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors surveyed the 29 cities whose mayors comprise its Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness. The survey sought information that would provide a better understanding of why there has been an increase in homelessness among families, what their problems are, which services are available to them, which services are lacking, and what can be expected in the future. The findings are summarized below:

THE PROBLEMS OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG FAMILIES

- The number of families requesting emergency shelter during the last two years increased, by an average of 31 percent, in all but one of the 29 survey cities. That one city said the number requesting shelter had remained the same. In no city has there been a decrease in requests for emergency shelter by families.

- Families represent just over one-third of the homeless population across the survey cities. Well over two-thirds of the homeless families are headed by a single parent; 30 percent are headed by two parents.

- Every survey city reported that the number of families temporarily living with friends or relatives because of their inability to maintain their own home has increased, and every city considers these families to be at high risk of becoming homeless in the near future.

- The survey cities identified a range of serious problems, in addition to lack of shelter, which homeless families face. Mentioned most frequently -- by nearly two-thirds of the cities -- were lack of food and/or poor nutrition. Just under six of every 10 cities identified problems relating to unstable school attendance and lack of access to education. The same number cited employment-related problems, such as unemployment, the lack of job skills and the need for job training, retraining and placement.

- Emotional and psychiatric problems were identifed most frequently -- by over half of the cities -- as a consequence of homelessness. Nine cities also listed increased stress; six cited low self-esteem. Other consequences listed were domestic violence; family breakups; the placement of children in foster care or the fear of children being taken away and placed in such care; school-related problems, such as unstable attendance, truancy and dropping out, and learning problems and below-average school work; poor physical health; and deteriorating standards of personal hygiene.

- Every survey city identified the lack of affordable housing as one of the main causes of homelessness. Employment-related problems were identified by two-thirds of the cities; inadequate public assistance benefits and problems with public assistance programs were cited by 62 percent of the cities.

SERVICES FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

- The number of shelter beds in the survey cities increased by 21 percent over the last two years. The number of beds increased in over two-thirds of the cities. In eight cities that number remained the same; in one it decreased. All but three of the survey cities have some shelter facilities which specifically accommodate families.

- In two-thirds of the survey cities families must break up in order to be accommodated in shelters. Ten cities reported that families always are sheltered together.

- On average, 30 percent of the demand by families for emergency shelter in the survey cities goes unmet. In 20 cities (69 percent), shelters must turn away families in need. Lack of resources was identified by 90 percent of these cities as a principal reason for families being turned away; 65 percent cited eligibility criteria as a principal reason.

- In well over half (56 percent) of the responding cities, homeless families are required to leave shelter facilities during specific times of the day. In 81 percent of the responding cities, the services that are available to homeless families during the day cannot meet the demand. In all but four cities, emergency shelters limit the period of time families may remain in the facilities.

- Assistance in obtaining permanent housing and emergency food assistance were the services most frequently established in cities to address problems faced by homeless families. Other services provided include health care, supportive services, job training, counseling or placement, day programs, and day care.

- Among the services needed by homeless families and currently lacking, additional housing affordable by low-income families was mentioned most frequently, followed by day care, supportive social services, jobs and/or job training, transportation, health care, transitional housing, emergency shelters, health care, nutritious food, more adequate levels of public assistance and faster certification procedures, and mental health services.

THE OUTLOOK FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

- The number of homeless families is expected to increase during the next year in nine out of 10 of the survey cities. Two cities expect it to remain the same; none expect the number of homeless families to decrease over the next year.

- Every city cited the lack of affordable housing as one of the major barriers which prevents homeless families from having a permanent home. Other problems frequently identified as barriers were unemployment and the lack of jobs and job training, and inadequate public assistance benefits.

INTRODUCTION

In December, 1986 the United States Conference of Mayors published a status report on hunger, homelessness and poverty in 25 American cities. One subject in that report received a tremendous amount of attention -- the increase in homeless families and the special problems which they face. That report found that:

> "By far, the most significant change in the cities' homeless population has been in the number of families with children, with four out of five of the survey cities reporting that the number of families with children seeking emergency shelter has grown. In 72 percent of the cities, families comprise the largest group for whom emergency shelter and other needed services are particularly lacking."

It became clear that more information was needed on homeless families and their children. This report is intended to gather that information so that there can be a better understanding of why there has been an increase in homelessness among families, what their problems are, which services are available to them, which services are lacking, and whether homelessness among families can be expected to increase or decrease in the future.

This report is based on information provided by city officials in the 29 cities whose mayors comprise the Conference of Mayors' Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness. It is made possible by a grant from the American Can Company Foundation, now know as Primerica Foundation.

The data were collected from the cities during April, 1987. For the purposes of this report, a homeless family is defined as a unit comprised of one or two parents and at least one child which does not have a place of its own in which to live. Much of the information was provided in response to open-ended survey questions posed by the Conference of Mayors.

BACKGROUND ON CONFERENCE OF MAYORS' EFFORTS RELATING TO HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS

In October, 1982 the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the U.S. Conference of City Human Services Officials brought the shortage of emergency services -- food, shelter, medical care, income assistance, energy assistance -- to national attention through a 55-city survey. That survey showed that the demand for emergency services had increased in cities across the nation, and that on average only 43 percent of that demand was being met.

Since that time the Conference has done numerous reports on hunger, homelessness and poverty in cities. These reports have documented the causes and magnitude of the problems, how cities were responding to them and what national responses were required. They include:

- o Hunger in American Cities, June, 1983
- o Responses to Urban Hunger, October, 1983
- o Status Report: Emergency Food, Shelter and Energy Programs in 20 Cities, January, 1984
- o Homelessness in America' Cities: Ten Case Studies, June, 1984
- o Housing Needs and Conditions in America's Cities, June 1984
- o The Urban Poor and the Economic Recovery, September, 1984
- o The Status of Hunger in Cities, April, 1985
- o Health Care for the Homeless: A 40-City Review, April, 1985
- o The Growth of Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty in America's Cities in 1985: A 25-City Survey, January, 1986
- o Responding to Homelessness in America's Cities, June, 1986
- o The Continued Growth of Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty in America's Cities: 1986, December, 1986
- o Local Responses to the Needs of Homeless Mentally Ill People, May, 1987

To spearhead the Conference's efforts to respond to the emergency services crisis in cities, the President of the Conference of Mayors appointed 20 mayors to a Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness in September, 1983. That Task Force is now chaired by Boston Mayor Raymond L. Flynn, and the number of mayors serving on it has increased to 29. The Task Force meets at least twice each year; many of its members have testified before Congress; and the cities represented on it have provided information to Conference staff on conditions relating to hunger and homelessness for the various reports that have been prepared.

THE PROBLEMS OF HOMELESS FAMILIES

THE INCREASED DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY SHELTER

The number of families requesting emergency shelter increased over the last two years by an average of 31 percent in 97 percent of the survey cities -- all but one. The increase ranged from 100 percent in San Francisco, 70 percent in Providence, 50 percent in New Orleans and 42 percent in New York City to 15 percent in Detroit and Hartford, 11 percent in Chicago, 10 percent in Salt Lake City and five percent in Nashville. Minneapolis reported no change in the number of families requesting emergency shelter. No city reported a decrease in demand.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Across the survey cities, families represent just over one-third (34 percent) of the homeless population. In Norfolk, 95 percent of the homeless population are families; in Trenton, 70 percent; in Providence, 65 percent; in New York City, 63 percent; and in Portland, 52 percent. New Orleans, Phoenix and San Antonio reported that 20 percent of their homeless population was families; Saint Paul said 17 percent; Hartford and Louisville, 15 percent; Charleston, 13 percent; and Minneapolis, seven percent.

Well over two-thirds of the homeless families in the survey cities are headed by single parents; 30 percent are headed by two parents. While Boston reported that nine percent of its homeless families were headed by two parents and Hartford, New Orleans, Norfolk, Philadelphia and Saint Paul reported 10 percent, Denver and Seattle said that 45 percent of their homeless families were headed by two parents, Salt Lake City said 61 percent, Portland, 65 percent, and Nashville 67 percent. In contrast, in Boston, 91 percent of the homeless families have single parents; in Hartford, New Orleans, Norfolk, Philadelphia and Saint Paul it is 90 percent; in Cleveland, 86 percent, in New York and Trenton, 85 percent; in Chicago, 84 percent; and in Washington, D.C., 82 percent. Thirty-three percent of Nashville's homeless families are headed by a single parent; in Portland it is 35 percent, and in Salt Lake City it is 39 percent.

FAMILIES DOUBLING UP

Every survey city reported that the number of families temporarily living with friends or relatives because of their inability to maintain their own home has increased, and every city considers these families to be at high risk of becoming homeless in the near future. Four cities described the direct relationship between doubling up and homelessness:

> Detroit: "Shelters report that a major and increasing reason given for homelessness is eviction by relatives or friends. One shelter reports that about 20 percent of their readmissions are due to this factor."

Los Angeles: "According to McChesney's study, 'doubling up,' as it is called, seems to be one of the first forms of defense used by Los Angeles area families against the prospect of homelessness. Interview data suggest that as families run out of kin or friends with whom to double up, they start to slide into brief and then into more extended periods of homelessness. Doubling up, then, can be a signal that a family is nearing homelessness." (The study referenced was conducted by Dr. Kay Young McChesney, Social Science Research Institute, University of Southern California.)

New York City: "Over 20 percent of homeless families surveyed in a recent study were evicted by a primary tenant they were doubled-up with immediately before becoming homeless."

Washington, D.C.: "Because the overwhelming number of families who have entered our (shelter) system claim overcrowding as their reason for homelessness, we consider these families to be at very high risk."

Officials in several other cities discussed the problems families face in such overcrowded situations:

Boston: "Families who are doubled-up and tripled-up are at a high risk of homelessness because the stability of their living arrangement depends on the goodwill of friends or family who are often already living in overcrowded conditions."

Hartford: "Doubling up arrangements are volatile and there is constant changing around. Owners are getting tougher about doubling up; the housing authority is getting tougher about doubling up."

Louisville: "They are at high risk of becoming homeless because of the additional stress that occurs when families double up....A family living in a subsidized unit is in danger of being evicted themselves when they allow a family to come and stay."

Nashville: "The families/friends who have previously taken care of the homeless family exhaust their own funds, patience and willingness to share with the homeless family....Most families who have taken care of homeless families have their own responsibilities and cannot tolerate overcrowded living conditions indefinitely....A lot of families sharing with homeless families are themselves in the low income stratum or are living in public housing, which prohibits housing persons not included in the lease agreement."

New Orleans: "The families are at risk because...the overcrowding from doubling up causes internal family problems -- increased stress, financial strain, exploitation of the elderly, and in some cases family violence."

Phoenix: There are "continuing pressures on families jointly sharing shelter, both emotional and economic."

Portland: "Other family support systems have become economically and/or emotionally exhausted as a resource."

San Francisco: These families are "highly vulnerable for eviction because an increased number of persons are in rented space, the living space is too small, and problems of personal interaction lead to 'evictions' by friends or relatives."

PROBLEMS FACED BY HOMELESS FAMILIES

In response to an open-ended question, the city officials identified a range of serious problems, in addition to the lack of shelter, which homeless families face. Mentioned most frequently were lack of food and/or poor nutrition. The 19 cities listing these problems were:

Boston	Charleston	Chicago	Cleveland
Detroit	Hartford	Kansas City	Los Angeles
Nashville	New Orleans	New York City	Norfolk
Providence	Saint Paul	Salt Lake City	San Francisco
Seattle	Trenton	Washington, D.C.	

Problems relating to unstable school attendance and lack of access to education were identified by 17 cities:

Boston	Charleston	Detroit	Kansas City
Los Angeles	Minneapolis	Nashville	New Orleans
Norfolk	Philadelphia	Providence	Saint Paul
Salt Lake City	San Antonio	San Francisco	Trenton
Washington, D.C.			

New Orleans officials described a variety of education problems, including "lack of education, difficulties registering children for school and applying for public assistance because of lack of proper documents such as birth certificates, low educational attainment and unstable school attendance." "Many of Boston's homeless families are placed in hotels outside the city, making it difficult for them to get to school or to the agencies designed to serve them." In Los Angeles, "regarding school attendance, the Travelers Aid Study determined that of the children in their study old enough to attend school, 43 percent were not currently attending. Other school-related problems consisted of children being sent home because they were dirty and school district jurisdictional problems because of irregular attendance and changing residence."

Seventeen cities cited employment-related problems, such as unemployment, the need for job training, retraining and placement, and the lack of job skills. These cities were:

Chicago	Cleveland	Denver	Detroit
Kansas City	Los Angeles	Nashville	New Orleans
Philadelphia	Phoenix	Portland	Providence
Saint Paul	San Antonio	San Francisco	Seattle
Washington, D.C.			

Sixteen cities identified the problem of inadequate income:

Chicago	Denver	Detroit	Kansas City
Los Angeles	Louisville	Minneapolis	Nashville
New Orleans	Philadelphia	Phoenix	Providence
Saint Paul	San Francisco	San Juan	Washington, D.C.

Phoenix officials pointed out that the minimum wage is less than a living wage. Kansas City mentioned the lack of jobs with wages adequate to support a family.

Sixteen cities also cited poor health and/or the lack of health care as problems faced by homeless families:

Boston	Charleston	Chicago	Denver
Detroit	Hartford	Kansas City	Los Angeles
Nashville	New Orleans	New York City	Norfolk
Providence	San Francisco	Trenton	Washington, D.C.

Other problems mentioned were:

Inadequate public assistance benefits and problems with public assistance programs -- by Denver, Detroit, Louisville, Nashville, Phoenix, Portland, San Antonio and Seattle. Officials from Denver, Nashville and Portland cited the fact that AFDC is not available to two parent families. Nashville described the 45-day delay in obtaining AFDC and the lack of emergency general assistance for intact families; Louisville the difficulty homeless families have in obtaining food stamps;

Lack of child care -- by Chicago, Denver, Kansas City, Nashville, New Orleans, Portland, San Antonio, and Trenton;

Domestic violence, including child abuse -- by Detroit, Hartford, Nashville, San Antonio, San Francisco, San Juan, Trenton and Washington, D.C.;

Emotional stress -- by Boston, New Orleans, Norfolk, and Portland;

Lack of transportation -- by Charleston, Chicago, Kansas City, Phoenix and Salt Lake City;

Lack of a support network -- by Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and New Orleans. In Los Angeles many homeless families have few relatives living in the area, and thus no one to whom they can turn.

Lack of a stable living environment -- by Cleveland, Norfolk and Seattle;

Other problems faced by homeless persons in the survey cities included lack of legal help, lack of recreational activities, inadequate social services, crime victimization, exposure to extreme weather conditions, potential for substance abuse and the lack of needed treatment, mental health problems and the lack of needed treatment, teenage pregnancy, and discrimination based on income.

Los Angeles officials discussed the vulnerability of homeless families: "Other problems which tend to develop are basically associated with a family becoming more vulnerable because shelter is not available. Examples would be an inability to obtain or maintain income assistance or to look for work, or a propensity to lose an existing job because there is no way to bathe or wash clothes."

THE IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Officials in the survey cities described a variety of negative effects that homelessness is having on the emotional and physical well-being of parents, children and families as a whole. This was in response to an open-ended question.

Emotional and psychiatric problems and personality disorders were mentioned most frequently -- by over half of the cities -- as a consequence of homelessness. The 15 cities reporting this were Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Kansas City, New Orleans, Hartford, Norfolk, Phoenix, Providence, San Antonio, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C. Nine cities listed increased stress; they were Charleston, Cleveland, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, Providence, San Antonio and Seattle. Boston, Nashville and San Francisco specifically reported on increased anxiety and depression. Low self-esteem was mentioned by Kansas City, Nashville, Philadelphia, Portland, Saint Paul and San Franciso.

Domestic violence was listed by 10 cities as a consequence of homelessness; they were Chicago, Detroit, Miami, Nashville, New Orleans, Norfolk, Portland, Providence, San Antonio and Seattle. Family breakups was cited by nine cities: Charleston, Chicago, Detroit, Louisville, Nashville, New Orleans, Norfolk, San Antonio and Washington, D.C. The placement of children in foster care, or the fear of a child being taken away and placed in such care, was cited by Charleston, Denver, Detroit, New Orleans, San Antonio and Trenton. Increased dependency by the family was cited by New York City, Providence, Saint Paul, San Juan and Washington, D.C.

School-related problems, such as unstable attendance, truancy or dropping out, were reported by Chicago, Detroit, Nashville, New York City, Washington, D.C. and Yonkers. Boston, Denver, Hartford and San Francisco listed learning problems or below average school work. Philadelphia and San Franciso both commented that homeless children are sometimes stigmatized at school.

Poor physical health was cited by Hartford, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Norfolk, San Antonio and Washington, D.C. New Orleans and San Antonio listed poor nutrition. Charleston, New Orleans and San Franciso discussed deteriorating standards of personal hygiene. Chicago, Detroit, Hartford, Providence and Washington, D.C. reported increased alcohol and drug abuse.

Other consequences of homelessness listed were lack of a stable environment, runaway youth, teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, lack of recreational outlets for children, and behavior problems with children.

Specific comments by the city officials on the consequences of homelessness included:

Boston: "A study of homeless families in Massachusetts conducted by psychiatrist Ellen Bassuk of Harvard Medical School revealed the following:

* One-fourth of the mothers were diagnosed as having major psychiatric clinical syndromes, 5790 were diagnosed with personality disorders.
* One-third of the children had difficulty not only with language skills, but also with motor and/or personal and social development.
* Close to half the children of school age were extremely anxious and depressed; 53 percent were failing or doing below average work in school."

Chicago: "Homelessness leads to a breakdown of family unity and stability which results in fragmentation and dependency. The impact on children may include truancy, dropping out of school, anti-social behavior, delinquency, and, perhaps, institutionalization; certainly they are at risk of not becoming independent, fully functional adults. The impact on adults may include despondency, depression, sickness, alcohol and drug abuse and, perhaps, physical abuse of family members. Certainly they are at risk of becoming dependent, dysfunctional individuals."

Denver: "Kids are behind academically; the stress of homelessness causes mental and emotional problems; kids from homeless families are often taken away."

Detroit: "Twenty-five percent of the homeless persons seen by Detroit's Health Care for the Homeless program appear to have psychiatric disorders, including schizophrenia, personality disorders, situational reactions to stress, developmental delay, adjustment reaction and depression. Shelters report frequent truancy problems with homeless children; family break-ups and lack of support from extended families, often resulting from past or present mental health problems or problems related to drug, alcohol or physical abuse. One shelter reported that about 15 percent of their single-women parents have had their children placed in protective custody."

Hartford: "The impact of homelessness on families is cumulative and very destructive. The mother can't get free of the children in order to go find housing or employment or to get counseling. The children have increased learning problems, are prone to alcohol and drug abuse, criminal activities, and mental and physical health problems."

Kansas City: "Homeless parents are increasingly afraid that 'someone' will take their children away because they cannot provide adequate housing. Parents shoulder enormous guilt over their 'failure' as parents. Their low self-esteem is shared by their children who are often the object of teasing and jokes in school because they are from a shelter. In addition to the emotional impact, physical health often

suffers. When checkups are available, follow-up prescriptions cannot be purchased."

Los Angeles: "A homeless family with two young children lived in the back seat of a car for long periods before finally finding shelter. In the new shelter, the children were unable to play on the floor. It turned out that in order to play they had to first find a couch or a large chair which possessed the familiar configuration of a car's back seat."

"Dr. McChesney reported four main effects of homelessness on children: developmental delay (not walking, talking, sitting up on time), developmental regression (e.g. children who had already learned to walk reverting back to crawling), stress symptoms (increased clinging, crying, nightmares), and illness (e.g. pneumonia, especially among children who had been living outdoors)."

Miami: "If children are in public care, AFDC and other assistance benefits may be reduced or denied....Families in shelters often end up in communal living situations, which sometimes include mentally ill individuals."

Nashville: "Children are exposed to an unstable environment, inconsistent role models and frightening strangers. In shelters, and on the streets, there are few opportunities for play or homework. Homeless children change schools frequently and are often the subject of taunts from their classmates.

"Many families have disintegrated at the point of becoming homeless. Those remaining intact are stressed and often separated by shelters. Marital problems frequently develop over the inability to find employment and lack of privacy. Desertion is common, as is domestic violence.

"The children are the silent victims of homelessness....They are not able to make friends with anyone; they are always 'strangers.'... Children do not know what a home atmosphere is all about....The children are learning a life-style which they will probably use when they grow up....They will probably be a second generation of homeless persons."

New Orleans: "Families may break up or experience emotional problems as a result of the unemployment of men who are ordinarily employed. The inability to provide a secure environment has a devastating effect on parents and children. Increased stress is a factor in many illnesses such as asthma, heart conditions, and ulcers, and it can exacerbate mental illness. It is impossible to maintain hygiene, nutrition, and follow medical treatment with no money. Fear of separation by family members often precludes their seeking assistance or reporting the existence of other family members.

"Domestic violence is on the rise -- the abuse of children and parent-to-parent abuse.

"Emotional problems in children result in added disciplinary problems in schools or the failure of young children to develop properly because they are forced to act as adults. Family stress caused by homelessness may result in child runaways, teen pregnancies, and criminal activity by children. Teenagers feel that they are forced to abandon their families. They are forced to survive on their own; sometimes they end up in prostitution."

New York City: "Many families become more dependent and lose basic independent living skills the longer they remain in a shelter. Children lack recreational outlets. Truancy increases, in part from the social stigma of homelessness. The lack of privacy in hotels and shelters severely strains marital and parental relationships."

Norfolk: Homelessness "fosters the splitting of couples, unstable relationships, spouse and child abuse, medical and mental health problems, and socialization and economic problems. It is more difficult for evicted people to get another apartment. It is hard to get a job due to unstable living conditions. Social Services will not assist without a permanent address. Homelessness encourages prostitution. Children express disappointment, hostility, are very aggressive, disruptive in the classroom, and tend to vent hostility toward their mother. There is disappointment by the wife and kids when the father cannot find work."

Philadelphia: There is "insensitivity of school personnel to children in a shelter, which interferes with their learning. Children are often stigmatized, eroding self-esteem. When a family is placed in an emergency shelter, it is often not a temporary situation. Families tend to remainin the shelters up to nine months, fostering stress and hopelessness in adults. Shelter placement further compounds feelings of inadequacy."

Phoenix: "We find that the crisis of homelessness often bonds intact families. It is only after the crisis of living on the streets is resolved that emotional issues, relationship problems, etc. begin to surface. This suggests that a long-term approach to assisting families beyond shelter is critical."

Providence: "Children's behavior is noted as poor; parents are acutely depressed. The children's stability is in question; they have no permanent friends, neighborhood, clubs. The stress of homelessness on two-parent families in shelters increases alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence and apathy."

San Antonio: "There has been an increasing incidence in family breakups. Children have been taken way from their parents because of neglect and abuse. Some parents have abandoned their children because of their inability to cope with the situation."

Saint Paul: "Homelessness is a symptom, not a cause, of problems such as family breakups or the placement of children in child welfare facilities -- real problems aggravated by the condition of homelessness. It

becomes a barrier to be overcome before other problems can be addressed."

Trenton: "The biggest fear, for mothers, is losing their children. While no one can argue with the necessity of the state taking children whose mother is unable to provide the basic necessities of life, the fact remains that she can only view it as punitive. Many homeless families are uncountable, as they hide in abandoned buildings or cars, fearing that if they request emergency shelter they risk losing their children."

Washington, D.C.: "The problems of the homeless family are the problems of America's poor in general. To be poor or homeless in the wealthiest nation in the world has an impact far greater than that which is on the surface. Being poor in America carries with it a stigma which can debilitate a family from generation to generation. Lack of self-esteem, a lack of motivation to succeed, and dependence on government aid are all results of a public welfare system which fosters these conditions.

"Though the full effects of homelessness on the family have yet to be examined, it is obvious that homelessness can only exacerbate already existing problems caused by joblessness, poverty, the lack of affordable low-income housing and cuts in federal housing subsidies and other necessary supports. The stress of displacement may often lead to other problems, including truancy among homeless children, increased substance abuse, physical and mental illnesses and the breakdown of the family unit."

Yonkers: "Being homeless means a total disruption of family life and support. There is disruption of the education of the child, there is a severe barrier to seeking training and/or help in finding employment because of the primary need to find permanent housing, and there is severe strain on the family makeup."

PROFILES OF HOMELESS FAMILIES

The city officials were asked to describe the conditions faced by a real or hypothetical homeless family in their city:

BOSTON -- A SINGLE MOTHER WITH TWO CHILDREN LIVING IN A HOTEL

"Jane is 26 years old with two children, ages three and five. They became homeless because they were evicted when the landlord increased the rent and they could no longer afford to pay it. Jane receives AFDC. When the family became homeless they stayed with relatives for a few months. They had to leave because of overcrowding and were placed in a hotel outside the city. The oldest child has had to miss school because Jane has no way to transport him."

CHARLESTON -- A TWO-PARENT FAMILY, HUSBAND INJURED ON THE JOB

"The husband is a construction worker injured on the job but not covered by Workmens' Compensation and ineligible for Unemployment Compensation.

The wife and two children are eligible for AFDC ($199/month) and food stamps after the husband's temporary disability is medically documented and applications are processed (six to eight weeks). The family falls behind on the rent and is evicted from their home. They go into one shelter and become ineligible for AFDC and food stamps because they lack a 'stable home.' When the shelter's seven-day limit arrives they must move on to another shelter, which is open from 9:00 PM to 7:00 AM. The family stays with relatives during the day, sleeping at the shelter at night. Finally, when the situation becomes too intolerable, the family splits up and stays with two different sets of relatives. When the husband is able to return to work --four months after his injury occurred -- the family begins to look for their own home."

CHICAGO -- A FAMILY LEFT HOMELESS BY A FIRE

"A fire which destroys their apartment building renders the Martin family homeless. The family has no close relations in the city, no insurance coverage to replace their possessions, and very little extra money for housing and restaurant costs. Additionally, because the family lives on a public assistance grant, finding an affordable apartment and saving enough for a security deposit will be a problem. As a result, the family is homeless."

CHICAGO -- AN EVICTED FAMILY

"The Jones family currently rents a six-bedroom apartment for $300 per month. Unknown to the Jones family, the landlord has abandoned the property, and City inspectors have brought the building to housing court because of numerous code violations. A judge declares the building unsafe and issues a court order giving 30 days to vacate the premises. Because of the size of their family, the Joneses need a very large apartment, but their limited income precludes them from paying market rates. Additionally, the meager family savings will not allow for payment of a security deposit plus moving or storage fees. On the scheduled date of eviction, the family becomes homeless."

DENVER -- A TWO-PARENT FAMILY, BOTH PARENTS LAID OFF

"Both parents worked and were laid off. They have a three-year-old daughter. They cannot find sufficient employment that will allow for permanent housing. The daughter is forced to live with a relative, and is experiencing a lot of emotional trauma and behavioral problems. The local economy does not allow for much more than day labor. Colorado doesn't provide assistance to two-parent families; unemployment benefits are not coming through soon enough."

DETROIT -- AN EVICTED FAMILY

"A family previously living in unfit housing must leave the dwelling because their landlord refuses to make repairs, or they are evicted for nonpayment of rent (sometimes caused by the theft of their money). This situation is usually only temporary until their assistance payment is available and a new dwelling found."

DETROIT -- A FAMILY BREAKS UP

"As the result of a family dispute or break-up, the female of the household takes the children and seeks shelter elsewhere. Usually she has no money, no job, no transportation and is not on welfare. Both she and her children may have been physically abused. Unemployment and consequent drug or alcohol use may be contributing factors to the break-up."

LOS ANGELES -- A SINGLE MOTHER WITH TWO CHILDREN

"A typical Los Angeles area homeless family would be of minority identity, led by a single mother in her late twenties or early thirties who had probably very low or no income before the episode of homelessness began. There would probably be two children. It would also be very likely that the key condition which tipped the family into homelessness was the lack of sufficient money to rent housing at market rates. Added to this would be the mother's inability to turn to her family because kin were either dead, living outside the area or estranged."

NASHVILLE -- A SINGLE MOTHER WITH TWO CHILDREN

"A family of three -- with a four year old and an early teenager in the fifth grade with acute truancy problems -- is homeless because of eviction from public housing for having pets and because of a fire in their apartment. The family receives AFDC and food stamps, but cannot get back into public housing. The mother has not worked for many years. Priorities, morale and values have broken down. The mother needs a program to get into the workforce. The daughter needs close supervision by the Department of Education. The family needs low-income, affordable housing. The youngest child needs affordable day care. The family needs motivation counseling."

NASHVILLE -- A SINGLE MOTHER WITH THREE CHILDREN FROM OUT OF TOWN

"A young mother of three children came to Nashville to escape an abusive husband. They requested help in locating housing. The baby appeared severely malnourished, and upon discussing this with the mother it was learned that the baby had gained only five pounds since birth more than six months earlier. The mother was referred to a medical facility for physical examination of the baby and nutrition counseling."

NEW ORLEANS -- A TWO-PARENT FAMILY FROM OUT OF TOWN

"Mr. and Mrs. X arrived in the city with their two children, ages 18 months and three years. They came here by car in hopes of finding employment. In order to find shelter Mr. X must be separated from his wife and children because there is no shelter for intact families. All of them must wake up early (usually 5:00 AM) regardless of the age of the children or their physical condition. Breakfast is provided, but they will not have another free meal until supper without the help of another agency. Each day they face the dilemma of what to do during the day. They have so many immediate needs that they have difficulty knowing where to begin.

"The only day shelter for families is a former chapel. The family chooses to walk the streets. Since they quickly use up their 'free' nights

at the shelter, Mr. and Mrs. X contact an agency such as Travelers Aid for help in paying for additional nights at the shelter. When they arrive at Travelers Aid or other agencies, they are tired from walking and are anxious about having to ask for help. The children are crying and acting out because of the confusion in their lives. The help of the agency is limited. Shelter vouchers can be provided for several nights. The husband joins a self-help program which will help him find work. Even if Mr. X finds work they will have difficulty finding an apartment they can afford. They will not be able to make deposits for utilities until the first paycheck. They have high start-up costs for furniture and other home furnishings, such as pots and pans. While looking for work, their car is vandalized and their few belongings stolen."

NEW ORLEANS -- A SINGLE MOTHER OF FIVE

"A mother with five children, three of whom are grown, was evicted from an apartment because of non-payment of rent by one of the grown sons. There was no father of record. The mother had two children living with her, boys seven and 10. She was a diabetic, requiring daily doses of insulin. She has no furniture, no clothes for the children, no food. Through the help of the pastor of a local church she was placed in an apartment where the rent was paid for two months. Food and clothing were provided by church members, assistance by city agencies and private charities. The struggle to survive finally took her life."

NORFOLK -- A TWO-PARENT FAMILY BREAKS UP

"Two parents with children were evicted on a cold, rainy day. They were three months behind in the rent, with no income coming in. The husband was a taxi driver who had gotten two speeding tickets; the wife did not work. They later divorced and the wife moved to North Carolina."

NORFOLK -- A MOTHER WITH TWO CHILDREN, HUSBAND IN JAIL

"A mother, age 22 with two children, was living with her sister and brother-in-law, who have three kids. The woman has no money, no job, no AFDC. She is pregnant and her husband is in jail. She has no place to go.

NORFOLK -- A SINGLE MOTHER

"A forty-year old Norfolk native with a 15-year-old daughter moved to California, but came back to Norfolk. The woman, who had attended college, was constantly job-hunting. She came to a shelter with $17.00. She became very paranoid about gossip; no job came in. The stress resulted in a nervous breakdown."

PHOENIX -- AN INTACT FAMILY

"The typical family is composed of a marginally skilled father, a teenage mother and two children. Because there are two parents the family is not eligible for many types of benefits. They have no funds for rent or deposits and limited mobility -- either no car or a car but no gas. Other problems of the typical family often include immigrant status or mental or physical health difficulties."

SAINT PAUL -- A SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY WITH TWO CHILDREN

"The typical homeless family is probably a single parent living in a shelter with two or more kids. They can stay for only 90 days. They may be waiting for a welfare appointment (three weeks) before they can get a check. They will owe some money for the stay in the shelter which, even though nominal, will take a significant portion of the welfare check when they get it. Landlords will want to know where they are living now. Those who will rent without references are often unconcerned about their apartments because they are run-down already. The family will use 75-80 percent of its check and a special allotment for rent and deposit just to get the apartment. They will have only $20 to $50 left, plus food stamps, which will have to be split between three people for the balance of the month."

SAN ANTONIO -- SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES

"A single mother with six children held a part-time, temporary job to pay restitution through the Bexar County Court in order to keep from being jailed. Because of her income she was declared ineligible for AFDC; after her job ended she was without resources to pay rent. Subsequent eligibility for AFDC was approved, but the process extended homelessness for six weeks."

"A single mother with one child could not be approved for AFDC until an out-of-town birth certificate arrived. It arrived five months after it was requested."

"A fifteen-year-old mother with one child was ineligible for emergency shelter because she was a minor. Resources for AFDC and housing were eventually approved, but the child was taken away from her in the process."

SAN ANTONIO -- A LAID-OFF VETERAN

"A laid-off veteran lost his home due to back taxes. His family of four was homeless for four months."

SAN FRANCISCO -- AN INTACT FAMILY OF SEVEN, FATHER DISABLED

"The father was on SSI due to a head injury at work which left him subject to unpredictable bouts of violence. He was taken off in 1982, without explanation, and has been trying to be reinstated since then. The family was staying with friends in Oregon when they heard through the Social Services Department that San Francisco had just had a big earthquake and there was lots of work cleaning up and restoring the city. They realized as soon as they arrived, just before Thanksgiving 1986, that they had been misled. The father has just received notice that he will be reinstated onto SSI. They received Season of Sharing funds to help repair their van."

SAN FRANCISCO -- AN INTACT FAMILY OF FOUR, CHILDREN TAKEN WAY

"Mom is an epileptic, on medication, and claims to have an AIDS-related condition. The stepfather of two years is a veteran. The family had been in other shelters and had recently moved from the Los Angeles area. The adults were loud and aggressive with both their children and others in the

shelter and community. They were attending Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings regularly. While at the shelter their family relationship deteriorated to the point at which the parents were discussing divorce. Physical abuse of the children was noted and Children's Protective Services was advised. The children are now in a group home; the parents cannot come into the shelter."

SAN FRANCISCO -- AN INTACT FAMILY OF FOUR

"Dad is a computer operator, but lost is job. Mom has serious asthma. She has been hospitalized during her stay at the shelter and must carry a portable oxygen machine. The children had pneumonia while at the shelter. Due to to mom's severe chronic illness, they were able to receive Season of Sharing funds and move into a studio apartment. They had a Section 8 Certificate, but could not find a place that they could afford, and still comply with Section 8 regulations."

SAN FRANCISCO -- A SINGLE MOTHER WITH ONE CHILD

"The family had been in a shelter in November 1986. At that time, the mother was assisted in getting onto AFDC, registering her son in school and moving into a shared apartment. The mother did not follow through with her paperwork once she was away from the shelter; she has some difficulty making decisions. The family returned to the shelter in February. Shortly afterwards the son was picked up by Children's Protective Services since he was not in school. The mother is staying at the shelter until she gets her financial situation straightened out, and is currently working toward having her son returned to her."

SEATTLE -- A SINGLE MOTHER WITH TWO CHILDREN, EVICTED

"A mother and two children from the Seattle area are on public assistance. She is employed part-time, receives no child support and lives in non-subsidized housing. She received a major increase in rent and utilities and was no longer able to pay rent. She was evicted and forced to go to an emergency shelter.

SEATTLE -- AN INTACT FAMILY

"A two-parent family (welder and clerk) and their three children came to Seattle from Illinois in search of employment and a better way of living. They had already been homeless in Illinois for a couple of years. With inaccurate knowledge of the labor market, the father could not find work as a welder. The family could not afford housing and is not eligible for public assistance. They went to a shelter."

TRENTON -- A SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY LEFT HOMELESS BY A FIRE

"A 21-year old mother, with a child of four and an infant a few weeks old, lost her housing when a fire burned down the building she lived in. She has teamed up with one or more of her three sisters and their children over the past few years, as her public assistance benefits were not sufficient for her to live on her own. After the fire she was placed in a local hotel as an emergency shelter client. She left the hotel to live with her

grandmother in public housing, but was told by the management that the apartment was now overcrowded and everyone including her grandmother would have to go. She went to live with her aunt. Having put her name on a long waiting list, she was told she had no priority as a fire victim. Management told her to leave her aunt's place, as it was also overcrowded. To date we have not been able to locate her."

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY

"A typical homeless family in Washington, D.C. is headed by a single female, 18-30 years old, with one to three children. Before entering a shelter she has lived with an extended family or friends who have helped shoulder the costs of food and child care because she has few job skills, little income and little education. Her lack of contribution to the extended family's household becomes a burden. Consequently, she is asked to leave and provide for her family. A homeless shelter is usually the mother's only realistic option.

"Once in a shelter the family must deal with the stress of displacement and adjust to a new environment. In many cases, social services staff and contractors are able to quickly provide the necessary services to place the family back into permanent housing and self-sufficiency. When a family's problems are more deep-rooted, the process becomes more difficult.

"In some cases, the homeless mother's lack of skills for independence plus insufficient income make it doubly difficult for her case worker to connect her with housing and job resources. This often results in a much longer shelter stay than either the City or the family would prefer. Prospective landlords may perceive the family as a risk, and may refuse to rent to them. Employment, for which the parent qualifies, will pay little more than her AFDC grant. Once a family is placed in permanent housing, it will take at least six months of follow-up by a social worker to keep the family from being displaced again."

THE CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG FAMILIES

Officials of the survey cities listed a variety of problems as major causes for homelessness among families in response to an open-ended question. Every single city discussed the lack of affordable housing. Other causes frequently mentioned include inadequate public assistance benefits and problems with benefit programs (by 69 percent of the cities), employment-related problems (by 66 percent of the cities), domestic violence (by 34 percent of the cities), poverty/financial problems (by 24 percent of the cities), and eviction or demolition (by 24 percent of the cities).

Among the city officials' comments regarding the lack of affordable housing were:

Trenton: "The number one cause of homelessness among low-income families is the inability to compete in the competitive housing market. Aggravating this problem is a consistent loss of affordable housing and the decline in the replacement and in the expansion of new housing."

Yonkers: "The overwhelming cause is the lack of available affordable housing, which has been exacerbated by the fact that even housing allowance payments provided by the Department of Social Services are not at levels necessary to provide permanent housing in the private sector rental market. While new housing is being built at a healthy rate in Yonkers, it is primarily condominiums for middle, upper-middle and upper-income families."

Providence: "There is speculation from out-of-state realtors. Rents are doubling. Assistance payments are inadequate; families are spending up to 80 percent of their income on shelter (the average is 65 percent). Affordable housing has declined in the past five years."

New York City: "A recent New York State report to the Governor and the Legislature on homelessness concluded that the loss of low-income housing, combined with the increase in households below the poverty level during the last decade, were major factors in the rapid increase of homelessness. The vacancy rate for low-income housing in New York City is currently 1.6 percent. Yet between 1982 and 1985 federal assistance for construction and renovation of low-income housing declined by $600 million. In New York City, 39,188 people are using Section 8 vouchers for rent subsides at the present time. However, there are over 70,000 city residents currently on the program's waiting list, with an average wait for a two, three or four-bedroom apartment of two years."

Boston: "Boston's housing market is very tight, with rental vacancy rates at less than three percent. From 1982-1985, the average price of a two-bedroom rose from $515/month to $863/month. At the same time, the federal government decreased spending on low-income housing from $33 billion in 1981 to less than $10 billion in 1986."

Denver: "Denver's affordable housing supply is only taking care of 37 percent of the demand."

Kansas City: "There are 195,000 housing units in Kansas City -- 32,800 are substandard; 13,000 are uninhabitable."

New Orleans: "The local housing authority has a waiting list of 5,168. There is large number of substandard housing units."

Phoenix: "There is a four-year waiting list for public housing."

San Francisco: "There is less than a one percent rental vacancy rate."

Seattle: "There are over 100 persons on the Section 8 waiting list for one-bedroom units. It takes over a year to move into a studio or a one bedroom apartment. There are over 2300 families waiting to get into Section 8 two, three and four-bedroom units."

Listing inadequate public assistance benefits and problems with public assistance programs were twenty cities (69 percent of the survey cities):

Boston	Charleston	Chicago	Denver
Detroit	Kansas City	Los Angeles	Louisville
Miami	Nashville	New Orleans	Philadelphia
Phoenix	Portland	Providence	Saint Paul
San Antonio	Seattle	Washington, D.C.	Yonkers

Chicago officials cited the fact that "income (or grant levels) of families receiving AFDC is less than half of the standard of need in the State of Illinois." In Boston AFDC benefits have been increased by 32 percent in the last three years, but they have not kept pace with the high cost of living. Louisville officials said:

> "Over 36 percent of the families staying in our shelters are receiving AFDC. The bottom line is that unless these single parent families receive other subsidies, such as housing, they cannot make it. Presently a family of three receives $197 in AFDC benefits and $200 in food stamps a month, plus a medical card. Looking at these extremely low figures, it is understandable that it is impossible for these families to have a decent standard of living. A recent study by Metro United Way of a family of four showed that to meet subsistence needs in Louisville, a full-time job paying $7 per hour is required."

Various problems with the AFDC program were cited. New Orleans officials noted that "male-headed households are not eligible for AFDC. There is a 45-day waiting period for AFDC and reduced AFDC assistance. AFDC workers have been cut back 30 percent while potential cases have increased 70 percent." According to Miami officials: "AFDC processing time is very slow -- 60 days from the time of application to the time of receiving payment."

Nineteen cities (66 percent) cited employment-related problems such as unemployment, lack of jobs and low-paying jobs as a cause of homelessness among families. They were:

Chicago	Cleveland	Denver	Detroit
Kansas City	Los Angeles	Louisville	Miami
Nashville	New Orleans	Norfolk	Philadelphia
Phoenix	Portland	Saint Paul	Salt Lake City
San Antonio	San Francisco	San Juan	

Eleven cities listed domestic violence as a cause of homelessness among families; they were Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Nashville, Norfolk, Portland, San Antonio, San Francisco, San Juan, Trenton and Washington, D.C. Six cities mentioned divorce or separation: Detroit, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Nashville, San Antonio and San Francisco.

Seven cities specified poverty or financial problems, as a cause of homelessness. They were: Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Nashville, New York City, Saint Paul and Washington, D.C.

Seven also cited eviction or demolition: Chicago, Detroit, Nashville, Norfolk, Saint Paul, Trenton and Washington, D.C. Four cities -- Chicago, Detroit, Hartford and Trenton -- listed fire.

Other causes cited were:

Substance abuse -- by Chicago, Detroit, Norfolk, Portland, San Francisco and Trenton;

Mental health problems and the lack of mental health services -- by Boston, Nashville, New Orleans, Norfolk and Saint Paul;

Poor budgeting skills -- by Charleston, Minneapolis, Nashville, Saint Paul and Trenton; and

Migration in search of jobs -- by Nashville, New Orleans, Norfolk, Providence and Washington, D.C.

Other problems cited were illiteracy, lack of day care, teenage pregnancy, incarceration of a spouse, crime victimization, and the inability to cope with the system.

SERVICES FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

SHELTER CAPACITY

Across the survey cities, the number of shelter beds available to homeless families increased by an average of 21 percent over the past two years. Twenty cities (69 percent) reported an increase, ranging from five percent in Denver, ten percent in Hartford, Norfolk and Yonkers, 33 percent in Louisville, 38 percent in Boston, 45 percent in Saint Paul and Philadelphia, and 54 percent in Salt Lake City, to 125 percent in Washington, D.C. In Nashville, officials noted that although the number of shelter beds for families doubled, from 60 to 120 beds, the number "is still very small in relation to the need."

The number of shelter beds stayed the same in eight cities: Charleston, Miami, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Phoenix, Providence, Seattle and Trenton. It decreased in one city, San Francisco, by 60 percent. This decrease is primarily due to intensified efforts by the City to move families living in hotels into permanent housing, by placing them into renovated units and helping them obtain necessary household supplies and meet moving expenses.

FACILITIES THAT PROVIDE SHELTER

A wide range of facilities are used in the cities to provide shelter to homeless families. Emergency shelter facilities are available to families in every survey city. In all but three cities -- Cleveland, San Antonio and Yonkers -- there are facilities that accommodate only families. Some city officials, however, noted that those facilities cannot provide the level of services that is needed. Officials in Los Angeles, for example, indicated that "there are no public emergency shelters in the city that serve exclusively families. Only very few private facilities accommodate solely families with children."

Hotels or motels are used to varying degrees by over half (52 percent) of the cities. Among them are Chicago, Cleveland, Hartford, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Nashville, Phoenix, Philadelphia, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle and Trenton. Whereas some of those cities, including Chicago, Kansas City, and Nashville, use hotels only occasionally, other cities rely on them more extensively. In Los Angeles, for example, FEMA-funded vouchers are used to house homeless families in hotels and motel, but officials there note that "those vouchers are not widely available." In contrast, over 75 percent of the families sheltered by New York City are housed in hotels.

Eleven cities, including Boston, Charleston, Denver, Kansas City, Nashville, Norfolk, Providence, Saint Paul, San Antonio and San Francisco specifically mentioned emergency shelters for victims of domestic violence. In San Juan, the only shelter for homeless families in the entire city specifically serves battered women and their children. Transitional shelters are used to house temporarily homeless families in at least eight cities -- Boston, Kansas City, New York City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Saint

Paul, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. In addition to hotels and intake shelters, New York City relies on two types of transitional housing to shelter homeless families: family shelters with private sleeping rooms and group dining and bathroom facilities; and family centers, which include private units with their own cooking and bathroom areas.

Other types of facilities mentioned include apartment units, by Seattle, Trenton and Yonkers; boarding homes, by Philadelphia and Providence; short-term seasonal shelters, by Hartford, Kansas City and Portland; trailers, by Salt Lake City; schools or churches, by Hartford; and private homes, by Kansas City, through a program that matches homeless persons with individuals in the community. Officials in San Antonio specifically mentioned a shelter for children, which houses abused, neglected and abandoned children, some of whom are also homeless.

FAMILY BREAKUP -- A REQUISITE FOR SHELTER

In two out of three of the survey cities, families must break up in order to be accommodated in shelters. Among the explanations provided by city officials:

> Boston: "Two-parent families or those with older male children may split up to obtain shelter because many family shelter facilities do not accept males over the age of twelve."
>
> Miami: "There are not enough family shelters in the city to accommodate all those in need." Those shelters that are available exclude older children and, as a result, some families must be broken up."
>
> New Orleans: "There are no shelters in the city that serve two-parent families. Members of the same family, therefore, often must go to separate shelters."
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> Los Angeles: "Sometimes, out of desperation, an intact family will split up, with the mother and child or children going to a shelter that does not accept men, and the father going elsewhere. While there has been some legal activity over the breakup of homeless families, the basic contributing cause of the breakups -- the critical shortage of shelter space for intact families in the city -- remains."
>
> Nashville: "While there are shelters that house intact families, they are generally insufficient to meet the need. Families which cannot be accommodated in those facilities must break up and go to separate shelters. Some men choose to stay outside the shelter where their wives and children are housed.
>
> Phoenix: "Often, if there are no family shelter space or motel vouchers available, the children are taken to a crisis shelter and the parents are separated into different wings of the city's main shelter facility."

Portland: "If the emergency shelters for families are full, the next available alternative is to break up the family and place them in separate shelters."

Providence: "With only six units for homeless families for the entire city (and perhaps the entire state), the breakup of families does occur. None of the shelters for domestic violence in the city accept boys over 13 years old."

Saint Paul: "All shelter facilities are run by private agencies which specify whom they will serve. Those facilities that accept intact families limit the time they may stay in the shelter for three or six days. After that time, families usually must break up in order to obtain shelter."

San Antonio: "There are limited numbers of family rooms at the shelters, so often families do have to break up."

Seattle: "Only eleven percent of the 1,430 emergency shelter beds in the city are available to two-parent families."

Trenton: "Often, families have to break up in order to obtain shelter. However, all attempts are made to place families together. Most shelters do not serve two-parent families with children who are 16 years of age."

Ten cities -- Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Louisville, Minneapolis, New York City, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, Washington D.C and Yonkers -- reported that homeless families are always sheltered together. Yonkers officials indicated, however, that while homeless families generally do not have to break up, "some families have to be relocated as far as 60 miles away from their original home in order to be accommodated."

THE UNMET NEED FOR SHELTER

On average, 30 percent of the demand by families for emergency shelter in the survey cities goes unmet. Estimates of unmet demand range from one percent in Detroit, five percent in Chicago and Trenton, and 10 percent in Cleveland and San Antonio, to 40 percent in Los Angeles and Yonkers, 50 percent in Kansas City, Miami, Providence, and Seattle, 60 percent in New Orleans, 80 percent in San Francisco and 85 percent in Norfolk. Six cities -- Boston, Hartford, New York City, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. -- reported that they meet all requests for shelter by families. Boston officials noted that those families which cannot be accommodated in the family shelters are referred to facilities that serve primarily single adults "which are unable to provide the special services that families need."

Some city officials referred to families who, for various reasons, do not seek assistance from emergency shelter facilities and, therefore, are not included in the survey cities' response regarding unmet demand. Trenton officials noted, for example, that often homeless families will hide, afraid that their children will be taken away from them by the state's protective

services. In Los Angeles, some families "resist seeking shelter because of fear of being forced to break up."

City officials explained what happens to those families who cannot be accommodated in emergency shelter facilities:

Los Angeles: "They are left to make do with conditions as they exist. This may be sleeping in a vehicle, bus station, park, along the beach, under a freeway overpass, or simply staying up all night as a final protective strategy."

Miami: "Many of those homeless families sleep in cars or on the beaches."

Providence: "Some are placed in hotels in a nearby state; others stay with friends or relatives for the night, moving from home to home; still others have no alternative but to live on the streets with their children."

Kansas City: "They sleep in vacant buildings, in cars, move in with relatives or other families, or leave town."

Louisville: "Most often, they double up with family or friends, which frequently leads to more problems."

Trenton: "They move in temporarily with relatives or into abandoned housing, or sleep in cars. They live wherever they can until the welfare system finds them."

Seattle: "Oftentimes, families that cannot be sheltered sleep in cars, return to or remain in distressed situations, or disappear."

Saint Paul: "They go to another city; some double up with others; others endure beatings or abuse in the place where they currently live."

San Francisco: "They stay temporarily with relatives or friends; they sleep in cars, in doorways; or they leave the city."

Phoenix: "They remain in the streets."

New Orleans: "The families remain homeless. They may double up with other family members for a while; sleep in cars, abandoned buildings, parks or overpasses; or sit in the bus station. Churches may finance a night at a low-cost motel. Some children are taken from parents and placed in the care of the State."

Nashville: "Some will find substitute facilities such as cars or empty buildings, or sleep on the streets."

Norfolk: "The families stay in cars, travel to another state, find someone with whom to live temporarily, sleep in abandoned houses or underpasses. During the day, they may go to the public libraries or fast food restaurants."

FAMILIES TURNED AWAY FROM SHELTERS

In 69 percent (20) of the survey cities shelters turn away families in need. Those cities are Boston, Charleston, Chicago, Cleveland, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Louisville, Miami, Nashville, New Orleans, Norfolk, Phoenix, Portland, Providence, Saint Paul, San Francisco, San Juan, Seattle, Trenton, Yonkers. The lack of resources was identified by 90 percent of the cities as the principal reason for families being turned away; 65 percent of the cities indicated that specific eligibility criteria regarding the individuals whom a shelter serve was a principal reason. Specific comments offered by city officials include the following:

> Boston: "Approximately 50 families are turned away from each shelter every month because of lack of space. (This figure represents double counting of families who called more than one shelter.)"
>
> Kansas City: "The shelter system expands beyond normal capacity during extremely cold weather to accommodate all those in need. However, under milder conditions homeless persons, including families, are sometimes turned away."
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> Portland: "There is a lack of sufficient resources to accommodate the increasing numbers of homeless families in the city, especially when church shelters close during non-winter months."
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> Yonkers: "Although in recent years there has been a steady growth in emergency shelters, there are simply not enough facilities available to handle the existing or projected demand from families."
>
> Los Angeles: "There are simply not enough beds in the city to meet the need. Moreover, the eligibility criteria of private shelters often preclude the use of those beds that are available by families with children. Shelters may serve single persons only, single mothers with children but not two-parent families, or they may limit the age of children they will serve."
>
> Phoenix: "In addition to the fact that some of the emergency shelters lack sufficient resources, some shelters do not serve homeless families that do not meet their particular eligibility requirements, such as proof of legal marriage and U.S. residency. The largest shelter in the city does not meet the need of children."
>
> New Orleans: "The eligibility criteria of the shelters in the city exclude intact families. Furthermore, some of the families (women and children) who do meet the criteria are not able to afford the cost required by some of the shelters. Some children are taken from their parents and placed in the care of the State."

Nine cities -- Denver, Detroit, Hartford, Minneapolis, New York City, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, San Antonio and Washington, D.C. -- reported that homeless families are not turned away from emergency shelters. San Antonio officials noted, however, that although "families are generally not turned away, there are exceptions. A Texas law prohibits shelters from accepting minors with children, although legislation has been introduced to

amend it. Also, single fathers with female children are not admitted to the dormitory-type family shelters when the family rooms are full."

LIMITATIONS ON THE USE OF SHELTER FACILITIES

In over half of the responding cities, or 56 percent, homeless families are required to leave shelter facilities during specific times of the day. Los Angeles officials report that this requirement "varies from shelter to shelter. Some facilities require families to leave early in the morning, while others provide extended shelter during daylight hours." Officials in Nashville and New Orleans indicated that shelters close early in the morning (6:00 a.m. or 6:30 a.m.) because there is insufficient staff to supervise the facilities and provide services other than nighttime lodging. In San Francisco, some emergency shelters are used for other activities during the day. In Cleveland, Denver, and Seattle, most of the shelters require the families to leave the facility during the day to look for work and housing and/or apply for public assistance. Charleston officials note that those families who cannot be accommodated in family shelters, and are placed in shelters designed to serve single adults, are required to leave the facility between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.

Two cities where homeless families are not required to leave shelter facilities during the day offered the following comments: in Detroit, "the parents are encouraged to seek permanent housing, employment or other social service benefits during the day"; and, families in Providence" are encouraged to keep appointments made by social workers and to perform daily duties" at the facility.

ALTERNATIVES DURING THE DAY

City officials identified, in response to an open-ended question, specific services or facilities that are available to homeless families who are required to leave the shelters during the day. Day centers were identified by five cities -- Hartford, Louisville, New Orleans, Nashville and Los Angeles. Nashville officials note, however, that those day centers which are currently available are not designed to meet the special needs of families and children. In Los Angeles, there are "a few family-oriented daytime programs that are available in the city's skid-row area. While there are some day services for homeless people in other locations, they tend to be the exception rather than the rule." Meal programs were specifically mentioned by San Francisco and Seattle; health services, by Nashville, San Francisco and Seattle; day care, by Seattle. Officials in Seattle, however, point out that those services that are available are "virtually nonexistent" in relation to the need.

For many of the families in Portland which must leave shelters early in the morning, the alternatives are spending the day in "libraries, stores, parks, or riding mass transit, staying in their car, or using a day room which is open for a limited number of hours." In Charleston, homeless families can go to soup kitchens for their lunch. During the rest of the day they often spend time in the public library or in fast food restaurants, where they can have access to restrooms. Officials note, however, that

"noisy children are not permitted in the library." Officials in San Francisco also mentioned the use of public facilities by homeless families during the day.

Officials from cities where homeless families are not required to leave the shelter identified various services that are available to those families during the day, mostly at the shelters. Among them are:

- Day care -- by Boston, Detroit, New York City, and Washington, D.C.;
- Counseling (including counseling on living skills) -- by Chicago, Detroit, Louisville, Providence, and Salt Lake City;
- Assistance in obtaining permanent housing -- by Boston, Detroit, Louisville, New York City, San Antonio and Washington, D.C.;
- Adult education/job training and placement -- by Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Louisville, New York City, San Antonio, and Washington, D.C.;
- Assistance in obtaining available entitlements -- by Chicago, Detroit, and Washington, D.C.;
- Health care -- by Detroit, New York City, San Antonio, and Washington, D.C.
- Transportation -- by Detroit and Providence;
- Meals -- by Boston, Detroit and Providence;
- Nutrition education -- by New York City;
- Assistance in obtaining clothing/furniture -- by San Antonio.
- Court advocacy, transportation and mental health counseling to victims of domestic violence -- by Chicago; and
- A school for homeless children -- by Salt Lake City.

Officials in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, where homeless families do not have to leave the shelter during the day, indicated that there are drop-in centers and meal programs available to them. Saint Paul officials also cited "health clinics, free clothing shops and free phones".

THE UNMET DEMAND FOR DAYTIME SERVICES

In more than eight in ten of the responding cities, the services that are available to homeless families during the day, in or outside shelters, cannot adequately meet the demand. Those cities include Boston, Hartford, Los Angeles, Louisville, New York City, Nashville, Phoenix, Saint Paul, San Juan, San Francisco, Seattle, Trenton, and Yonkers. Specific comments by city officials included:

Kansas City: "There is little or no money to support those few services that are available during the day and which rely on volunteers. As a result, they can only offer very limited assistance. The number of homeless families in need of those services is far beyond the scope of a voluntary effort."

New Orleans: "The multi-service center, the principal program that serves homeless individuals in the city during the day, cannot accommodate all those in need, including families, because of inadequate space and resources."

Chicago: "Not all homeless families have access to the support services that are available because they are provided mostly to families who are in shelters. More of those services are needed by families both in and outside the shelters."

Boston: "There are currently insufficient shelter beds for families in the city. Although families are placed in hotels, these are usually outside the city and offer a less supportive environment than shelters. The location of those hotels makes it difficult for the families to access whatever services are available."

Detroit and Miami, two of the five cities that report that the demand for existing daytime services is not being met, noted that the services they identified -- counseling and other social services -- meet the need of only those families that are in the shelters where those services are available.

LIMITS ON THE TIME FAMILIES MAY STAY IN SHELTERS

In all but four cities -- Detroit, Minneapolis, New York City, and Philadelphia -- emergency shelters limit the period of time families may remain in the facilities. Detroit officials note, however, that "although there is no time limit, the shelter may ask a family to leave if the family does not appear to be actively pursuing permanent housing or breaks shelter rules (e.g., drug or alcohol violations)." The specific time limitations vary among cities and among shelters within the particular cities, ranging from one day to one year. The following explanations were provided by city officials:

New Orleans: "All shelters have different time limits. The longest stay allowed is 30 to 60 days for women, their daughters, and sons under 12 years of age. The shortest stay is one free night every 90 days. Those shelters which charge a fee do not have these limitations."

Hartford: "The State limits all shelter stays to 56 days in any one year. Some shelters limit the stays to 30 or 45 consecutive days. However, that time is extended during winter months."

Portland: "Families remain in the church shelters on a week-by-week basis. They need to show a willingness to work with their case manager and that they are trying to improve their situations with the limited

resources available. Families may be vouchered in motels for up to 14 days once a year."

Boston: "Most family shelters have a maximum stay of three to four months. However, this deadline is often extended for families waiting for a specific apartment, or for those families that have a especially difficult time finding housing (e.g., very large families)."

Seattle: "The average length of stay of a family is 31 to 36 days. However, larger families often may stay longer."

Providence: "Families in shelters are initially told they can stay up to a week. If after an assessment families can show they are working toward meeting the goals of the case management plan and are actively seeking permanent housing, they may stay up to 30 days, with only a few exceptions."

Washington, D.C.: "The limitations are set up as goals for shelter staff and families. They are not enforced rules. The recommended shelter stay for an emergency shelter is up to 30 days; 60 to 90 days for a transitional center."

Saint Paul: "The time limitation of the two shelters that serve homeless families is three days, with a one-time extention of three more days. This period is expected to allow the families enough time to move into a longer-term shelter. Rarely are those families able to arrange for an apartment within three days. As a result, the families may be forced to break up temporarily."

Los Angeles: "It varies. In some instances, a homeless family's stay may be limited to one night and that might also involve leaving the shelter early the next morning. Other shelters may allow them to stay up to one month."

SERVICES ESTABLISHED IN CITIES

Responding to an open-ended question, officials from the survey cities identified specific services, other than emergency shelters, that have been established in their city to address problems faced by homeless families. Three cities -- Miami, Providence and San Juan -- reported that no services have been established to address the special needs of homeless families. (Services listed by some of the other survey cities serve all homeless persons, including families.) Providence officials noted that "many attempts to establish special programs for homeless families have proven futile because of lack of financial resources and an inability to locate facilities in which to house those programs." Officials in Los Angeles indicated that "other than a few day services, very little has been done to address the special problems which homeless families face. The fact is that due to the continuing growth in the number of homeless people in the city, current resources tend to be directed more toward general emergency shelters not usually equipped to meet the special needs of families and children."

Among the specific services established in the cities to address problems faced by homeless families, assistance in obtaining permanent housing was most frequently mentioned -- by 17 (59 percent) of the survey cities. Those services range from counseling to increasing the availability of affordable low-income housing. Specific initiatives mentioned by cities include:

> New York City: "The City pays bonuses to landlords who agree to lease an apartment to a homeless family for three years at the public shelter rate. Also, the City has made available approximately 4,000 city-owned apartments a year for homeless families. Through a rehousing assistance program, the City helps homeless families in emergency shelters to overcome barriers which delay their moving into permanent housing. (This effort has reduced moving delays from an average of 60 days to seven days.)
>
> Boston: "In addition to developing 36 units of transitional housing for homeless women and children, the City is supporting private efforts to develop another 100 transitional units at various sites by providing buildings and/or land at low cost, low-interest loans, or grants. Efforts to expand the supply of affordable low-cost housing include zoning changes, such as requiring downtown developers of commercial projects of over 100,000 square feet to contribute $5 per square foot to a low-income housing trust."
>
> San Francisco: "With the help of a special budget allocation by the Mayor, the City is giving high priority to providing permanent housing to homeless families who have been living in hotels by placing them into renovated units of the Housing Authority and helping them with moving expenses."

Other cities which cited efforts to help homeless families to obtain permanent housing include Charleston, Detroit, Kansas City, Louisville, Minneapolis, Nashville and Philadelphia.

Emergency food assistance facilities, such as soup kitchens, were also cited by 17 cities: Charleston, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Hartford, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Nashville, Norfolk, Providence, Saint Paul, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Seattle, Trenton, Washington, D.C. and Yonkers.

Health care was identified by 14 cities: Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Louisville, Nashville, New York City, Saint Paul, Salt Lake, San Antonio, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C. Notably, ten of those cities received grants from the Health Care for the Homeless Program, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Pew Memorial Trust. Seattle officials note that the "Health Care for the Homeless program has been a major asset in providing medical and mental health services to homeless families."

Supportive services, including counseling and case management, were identified by 13 cities. Among them are Detroit, Nashville, Trenton, Philadelphia, New York City and Yonkers. In Chicago, the City has developed a comprehensive supportive services program which includes: "case management; stabilization (i.e., placement in independent living housing arrangements or

with relatives or friends); linkages with available entitlements and other benefits; living and parenting skills counseling; and various other supportive services, such as day care, parenting skills, health care, transportation, job training, and employment counseling."

Ten cities -- Boston, Kansas City, Philadelphia, Norfolk, Seattle, Salt Lake City, Louisville, New York City, Denver and Yonkers -- specifically cited job training, counseling or placement. In Yonkers, "the local private industry council, through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), is starting a major effort aimed at assisting homeless people to find full-time employment."

Day programs, have been established in at least eight cities: , Denver, Los Angeles, Louisville, Minneapolis, Nashville, New Orleans, Phoenix and Saint Paul. Los Angeles officials specifically cited a "few family-oriented daytime programs". Officials in Nashville, Louisville and New Orleans indicated that existing day programs serve all homeless people, including families. Day care services were identified by seven cities: New York, Phoenix, Detroit, Denver, Seattle, and Nashville. Officials in Nashville noted, however, that those services are very limited (six to ten slots). In Seattle, day care is available only "minimally" to homeless families.

Other services that have been established in the survey cities include:

- Mental health day centers -- by Cleveland, Phoenix and Yonkers;
- Transportation -- by Nashville and Detroit;
- Legal aid -- by Kansas City;
- A 24-hour hotline with placement capability -- by Trenton;
- A rent abatement program to prevent evictions and maintain low-income housing -- by Trenton;
- A program which matches homeless individuals with private citizens -- by Kansas City;
- A Home-Based Head Start program, which provides various services to families in hotels -- by San Francisco; and
- Adopt-a-Family, which matches families with churches for three o months of financial and emotional assistance -- by Phoenix.

Several cities identified various plans, currently in different stages of implementation, which have been developed to address the special problems faced by homeless families. They include the following:

Portland: "As part of the Mayor's 12-Point Program for the Homeless, a Coalition for Homeless Families, which is comprised of various community agencies, developed and is implementing a model of service delivery for homeless families. This three-tier, neighborhood-based approach involves: the provision of emergency shelter in houses,

churches or motels; transitional shelters in leased apartment units; and long-term planning, through case management and the provision of other supportive services."

Washington, D.C.: "In response to the ever-increasing numbers of homeless families, the D.C. Commission on Homelessness, in conjunction with the Department of Human Services and private providers, developed a Comprehensive Plan for Homeless Families to address major problems facing this population. The plan includes: establishing geographical, ward-based social services to provide preventive aid to high-risk families; expanding the use of transitional facilities as alternatives to emergency shelters; and expanding the low-income housing market through various specific efforts."

Seattle: "More strategies between City day care programs, public schools and housing programs for families are being developed to assist families caught in the cycle of homelessness."

Louisville: "Presently, for every family that is provided emergency housing, two are turned away. To address this critical need, the Mayor has established a goal of providing 50 additional family units with $500,000 in federal Community Development Block Grant funds (to be matched by other public and private sources.)"

SERVICES NEEDED BUT CURRENTLY LACKING

Again in response to an open-ended question, officials in the survey cities identified a wide range of services that are specifically needed by homeless families but which are lacking or not sufficiently available. Most frequently mentioned -- by two-thirds of the cities -- was the need for additional low-cost affordable housing. Among those cities are Charleston, Cleveland, Denver, New Orleans, Portland, Phoenix, Philadelphia, Providence, Saint Paul, San Antonio, San Francisco, Nashville, Seattle and Yonkers. Officials in Kansas City, Saint Paul and Yonkers specifically identified low-cost housing as the "primary" unmet need of homeless families. Washington, D.C. officials indicated that "although the problems of homeless families are varied, the most pressing need is decent, affordable, low-income housing. Speculation, increased development, gentrification and cuts in federal housing subsidies all play a major role in the loss of available low-cost housing stock," they added.

Day care, mentioned by 55 percent (16) of the cities, was second on the list of services needed by homeless families, but currently lacking. Among those cities are Boston, Denver, Hartford, Kansas City, New York City, Los Angeles, Portland, Providence, Miami, New Orleans, Seattle and Trenton. Officials in Phoenix reported a need for "long-term inexpensive child care." Chicago officials noted that "it is difficult for parents to find affordable housing, apply for public assistance, seek employment, etc., while caring for their children." In San Antonio, after-school care as well as day care for younger children were identified as major unmet needs.

Fifty-two percent (15) of the survey cities cited the lack of needed supportive social services, such as counseling, case management, and advocacy. The need for counseling services in general was identified by seven cities, including Chicago, Detroit, Norfolk, San Juan, and San Francisco. Counseling in living and/or parenting skills was specifically mentioned by Chicago, Detroit, Providence, San Antonio, and San Francisco. Seven cities, including San Francisco, Nashville, and Seattle, reported the need for case management, which includes assisting families in accessing the wide range of services which they need. Saint Paul officials indicated that "many homeless families need one-on-one assistance by a trained case worker with whom they can discuss their problems, and who can assist them in developing a plan to become self-sufficient." Officials in Detroit and Nashville specifically mentioned the need to provide follow-up case management to recently homeless families after they are placed in permanent housing to help prevent their becoming homeless again. The need for housing counseling was cited by Chicago, Hartford and San Antonio; employment counseling by Chicago, Miami and Nashville. Assistance with money management was mentioned by San Francisco and Miami.

Thirteen cities reported that jobs and/or job training needed by homeless families are not sufficiently available. Among those cities are Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Kansas City, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Norfolk, Portland, Providence, San Antonio, Detroit, and Nashville. Phoenix officials stressed the need for more "decent paying, stable jobs."

Transportation to help homeless families to access needed services and to seek housing and employment was cited by eleven cities, including Charleston, Chicago, Kansas City, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Phoenix, San Antonio, San Juan and Trenton. The need for health care services for homeless families was reported by nine cities, including Charleston, Chicago, Hartford, Kansas City, New Orleans, and Norfolk. New York City officials specifically mentioned the need for prenatal care.

The need for transitional housing with supportive services was identified also by nine cities, including Detroit, New Orleans, and San Francisco. Nine cities also cited the lack of sufficient emergency shelters. Trenton officials reported that "shelter capacity needs to be increased and alternative shelter and housing programs are required to meet the diverse needs of this population." In Nashville, there is a need for more "small, homelike shelters geared to the special needs of families, including two-parent families." In New Orleans, "emergency shelter for intact families at no cost to those families" is particularly lacking.

Homeless families' inability to access nutritious food because of inadequacies in existing food assistance programs was cited by eight cities. In New Orleans, free lunches are often not available to homeless families. In Kansas City, there "is not a sufficient amount of food for homeless families and oftentimes the food that is available is not nutritious." New York City officials indicated that "re-strictive food stamps regulations negatively affect families' ability to obtain proper nutrition." Federal regulations of the food stamps program were also identified as barriers to homeless families receiving needed food assistance in Louisville. Officials

in San Antonio note that excessive delays in the processing of food stamps applications present serious problems to homeless families.

More adequate levels of public assistance or faster certification procedures were mentioned by seven cities, including Phoenix, Providence, and Miami. In Detroit, officials note that "the average rental unit costs is $322.00 a month. The average rent for a typical three-person AFDC case, however, is $194.00, and only $140.00 is covered by the allotment."

Additional mental health services for homeless families were reported needed in six cities -- Kansas City, Los Angeles, San Juan, Norfolk, Miami, and Seattle. Alcohol and drug abuse counseling and treatment were mentioned by Hartford, Portland, Salt Lake City and Seattle. Officials in Seattle stressed that both mental health and substance abuse services "are desperately needed for homeless families." Hartford officials note that "drug and alcohol abuse are important factors in families becoming homeless and remaining homeless."

Day shelters, designed to meet the special needs of families, were mentioned by Nashville, Charleston, Portland, and Salt Lake City. Other services needed by homeless families but which are lacking in the survey cities include:

- Employment counseling -- by Chicago, Miami, and Nashville;
- Legal services -- by San Juan and Kansas City;
- Clothing -- by Norfolk and San Juan;
- Assistance in obtaining household supplies and with moving expenses -- by San Francisco and Nashville;
- Recreational activities for youth -- by New York City;
- Public restrooms -- by Charleston and Nashville; and
- Housing counseling -- by Chicago, Hartford, and San Antonio.

THE OUTLOOK FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

THE EXPECTED INCREASE IN HOMELESS FAMILIES

More than nine in ten of the survey cities expect the number of homeless families to increase during the next year. Two, Louisville and Minneapolis, expect the number to remain the same. No cities expect the number of homeless families to decrease during the next year. A variety of reasons for the expected increase, including the lack of affordable housing, the lack of jobs, poor economic conditions, and inadequate benefits in public assistance programs, were given by the city officials. Their comments included the following:

Detroit: "Recent announcements of plant closings by auto manufacturers are expected to result in the loss of 36,000 jobs in the Detroit area. Only about a quarter of them will be replaced by the end of this decade. The continued inadequacy of public assistance payments, higher energy costs and the demolition of about 5,000 abandoned dwellings will aggravate the shortage of decent, affordable housing for very low-income people."

Chicago: "The demand for emergency assistance by clients with shelter needs has been increasing annually for several years and is expected to continue. In addition, some aspects of the 'welfare reform' experiment being tried in Illinois have the potential for generating increased demand for emergency shelter and food."

Hartford: "A continuation of the regional poor coming into our city as well as increasing rents and increased displacement will cause more families to be homeless. Housing for low-income families is lacking, and financial incentives to develop low income housing are dwindling."

Los Angeles: "Families which appear the most at risk of becoming homeless are those who are already poor and who don't have access to a network of kin support. The number of families who are living at or below the poverty line in Los Angeles has increased steadily over the past several years, and the decrease in income transfer type programs, and other 'safety net' programs, over this same time period continues to weaken many of them further."

Miami: "1) Poverty is increasing. 2) Affordable housing units are deteriorating. 3) No new public housing is being built. 4) We expect increased immigration from Central and South America. 5) Cutbacks in federally funded social programs will cause additional problems. 6) Unemployed persons and their families from industrial cities are increasingly moving to this area."

Nashville: "Until the causes of homelessness are adequately addressed, the number of homeless people, including families, will continue to grow."

New Orleans: "Because of the high unemployment rate in the city and the economic downturn, heads of families will be unemployed for longer periods and will use up their reserves. The State is considering reducing unemployment compensation benefits, which will provide less financial support to the unemployed. Due to problems in the local economy, the number of rental evictions and foreclosures will escalate, forcing more families out of their homes."

Portland: "Unemployment in the State of Oregon will remain high because economic recovery continues to be sluggish. In addition, families already homeless require more of more types of assistance than are currently available to become self-sufficient again."

Saint Paul: "Low wages and overall economic conditions will contribute to an increase in homeless families."

Seattle: "The number of homeless families will continue to grow as homelessness increases."

Norfolk: "The housing market has been tighter and tighter. The poor have been forced out of affordable housing. The poor have not been able to keep pace with inflation."

Four cities cited the housing shortage and the lack of federal assistance in this area specifically as the reasons for an expected increase in homeless families:

Boston: "While the City and State have worked to increase affordable housing production, there continues to be little support from the federal government for this effort. With an increasing population, Boston's housing market will continue to be tight, especially for low-income residents."

New York City: "The lack of decent, low-income housing will increase the housing shortage and the number of people who cannot find a place to live. There is a lack of federal assistance to help create decent, low-income housing."

Philadelphia: "Many families are currently living in marginal housing, which they will be forced to vacate as conditions worsen. All costs related to rent, such as utilities or heat, are increasing in the private market. Increased appropriations on the state and federal level to supplement low and moderate-income housing are lacking."

Yonkers: "Until an aggressive program of construction of new housing and rehabilitation of existing housing with affordable rents can be sustained, the problem of homeless families will continue to grow. The housing which can now be defined as affordable is primarily the oldest housing stock in the city (dating as far back as the early 1900's), and are the likeliest candidates for abandonment, condemnation or fire damage."

BARRIERS TO PERMANENT HOUSING FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

In response to an open-ended question, officials of the survey cities identified a variety of major barriers which prevent homeless families from having a permanent home once again and from significantly improving their living conditions. Every city cited the lack of affordable housing as one of the major barriers. Other problems identified frequently were unemployment and the lack of jobs and job training, and inadequate public assistance benefits.

Well over half (16) of the survey cities listed employment-related problems, including unemployment, lack of jobs, and the lack of job training or counseling as barriers. They were:

Charleston	Cleveland	Chicago	Denver
Detroit	Kansas City	Los Angeles	Louisville
Nashville	New Orleans	Norfolk	Philadelphia
Portland	San Antonio	San Francisco	Washington, D.C

Over one-third of the cities mentioned inadequate benefits in public assistance programs and delays in receiving them as barriers to permanent housing for homeless families. They were:

Boston	Chicago	Denver	Detroit
Kansas City	Louisville	Nashville	New Orleans
Providence	Trenton		

Poverty, or lack of income, was identified as a barrier by Detroit, Minneapolis, Nashville, Saint Paul, Trenton, Washington, D.C. and Yonkers. Lack of child care was listed by Chicago, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Louisville, Norfolk, Portland and San Francisco. Lack of counseling and case management were cited by Charleston, Nashville, Norfolk, Portland, Providence and Seattle. Poor health and the lack of health care were mentioned by Chicago, Kansas City, Louisville, Nashville and Norfolk; insufficient mental health services by Kansas City, Nashville and New Orleans.

Other barriers identified were limited family planning services, lack of home living skills, prejudice and isolation, illiteracy, lack of education, lack of transportation, lack of food, lack of clothing, and lack of transitional housing.

Commenting on the major barriers to permanent housing for homeless families, the city officials said:

> Yonkers: "The city's steadily growing economy, the city-wide increase in average family income, and the generally stable prosperity is resulting in a distinct increase in the cost of housing and the price of housing rentals. Therefore, the gap with the homeless continues to grow."
>
> Trenton: "The current welfare system, particularly in urban areas, was never designed to handle poverty to the extent it exists today. Low-income communities are poorly equipped to compete with middle-income requirements. In developing regions such as the Route One/Princeton

Corridor, the economy excludes anyone who cannot participate in the mainstream. Poverty today is the result of the limited access of the poor to participate in the mainstream effectively. The urban areas, once a refuge, are now under siege as the only affordable housing market for all. The poor have little chance to compete against the growing pressures of the middle-income community which is being pushed out of suburbia. In many regions there is simply no place for the poor to go other than the streets."

Seattle: "Access to affordable or subsidized housing in Seattle is difficult. Families, even after finding a permanent living environment, experience great distress and upheaval. To transition effectively, they need substantial intervention and support over a one to two year period after they find permanent housing to break the vicious cycle of homelessness."

Nashville: Major barriers mentioned include the "shortage of day care; an absence of emergency financial assistance; unavailability of identification, addressees and references required for jobs, housing and benefits; lack of local transportation and telephone; scarcity of low-income housing affordable by persons on benefits or persons working unskilled jobs; waiting periods for Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance benefits; and benefit residency requirements and exclusionary policies toward intact families."

Chicago: "Barriers include inadequate public assistance levels, lack of jobs with wages sufficient to support a family, lack of home-living skills, lack of affordable housing, and the lack of supportive services including day care, health care, transportation, job training and employment counseling."

Los Angeles: Major barriers include the "lack of sufficient permanent, affordable low-cost housing; the lack of transitional housing and support for homeless families of sufficient magnitude to create a flow of homeless families back to the mainstream, thereby freeing resources for retargetting on other homeless problems; and, finally, the lack of employment opportunities leading to wages sufficient enough to move a family out of poverty and beyond. Child care services, particularly for single-parent homeless families, would be particularly valuable in this regard."

Detroit: Major barriers include the "lack of jobs and job-training; rental rates for standard housing which are much higher than public assistance provides for the housing allotment; lack of support from extended families, and family break-ups; and the continuing growth of an 'underclass' caught in a worsening cycle of poverty."

Washington, D.C.: "The major barriers to placing homeless families in permanent housing are chiefly the lack of low-income housing, coupled with income limitations due to the lack of employment or career skills. A negative perception of the homeless in the private sector also limits the availability of vacant units."

Louisville: In reviewing our AFDC grant amounts, it is clear that a comprehensive federal welfare/work reform package must be developed because it is so desperately needed in Kentucky. In order to make these individuals self-sufficient and strengthen families, a variety of supportive services must be included. Extensive education and training provisions, child care, health care and family counseling are particularly important. If this approach were adopted on the federal level, we would, for the first time, have an opportunity for these families to have permanent independence and permanent housing, thus decreasing the welfare rolls."

APPENDIX

CITY DATA ON HOMELESS FAMILIES

CITY	PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN REQUESTS FOR EMERGENCY SHELTER	PERCENT OF HOMELESS POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF HOMELESS FAMILIES 2 PARENTS	1 PARENT	PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN SHELTER BEDS	PERCENT OF DEMAND UNMET	FAMILIES TURNED AWAY YES	NO
BOSTON	slight	23	9	91	38	0	X	
CHARLESTON	25	13	35	65	0	--	X	
CHICAGO	11	40	16	84	8	5	X	
CLEVELAND	20	35	14	86	25	10	X	
DENVER	35	30-35	45	55	5	2		X
DETROIT	15	40	25	75	15	1		X
HARTFORD	15	15	10	90	10	0		X
KANSAS CITY	25	45	44	56	15	50	X	
LOS ANGELES	35	25	30	70	46	40	X	
LOUISVILLE	--	15	37	63	33	67	X	
MIAMI	50	25	42	58	0	50	X	
MINNEAPOLIS	0	7	30	70	0	0		X
NASHVILLE	5	23	67	33	100	16	X	
NEW ORLEANS	50	20	10	90	0	60	X	
NEW YORK CITY	42	63	15	85	42	0		X
NORFOLK	--	95	10	90	10	85	X	
PHILADELPHIA	--	30	10	90	45	0		X
PHOENIX	30	20	--	--	0	70	X	
PORTLAND	35-40	52	65	35	20	25-30	X	
PROVIDENCE	70	65	27	73	0	50	X	
SAINT PAUL	--	17	10	90	45	--	X	
SALT LAKE CITY	10	25	61	39	54	--		X
SAN ANTONIO	20	20	44	56	15	10		X
SAN FRANCISCO	100	20-25	33	67	-60	80	X	
SAN JUAN	20	--	--	--	--	--	X	
SEATTLE	30	29-30	45	55	0	50	X	
TRENTON	25	70	15	85	0	5	X	
WASHINGTON, D.C.	28	25-30	18	82	125	0		X
YONKERS	5	50	40	60	10	40	X	

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY CITIES

CITY	POPULATION	1979 POVERTY RATE	FEBRUARY, 1987 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Boston	560,847	20.0%	4.2%
Charleston	69,510	21.8	5.3
Chicago	2,997,155	20.3	8.8
Cleveland	558,869	22.1	11.7
Denver	505,563	13.7	9.4
Detroit	1,138,717	21.9	11.5
Hartford	136,334	25.2	7.4
Kansas City, MO	445,222	13.2	5.9
Los Angeles	3,022,247	16.4	7.5
Louisville	293,531	19.3	9.2
Miami	382,726	24.5	6.9
Minneapolis	369,161	13.5	4.4
Nashville	455,252	12.6	4.5
New Orleans	564,561	26.4	11.2
New York City	7,086,096	20.0	6.0
Norfolk	266,874	20.7	4.9
Philadelphia	1,665,382	20.6	6.3
Phoenix	824,230	11.1	6.8
Portland, OR	367,530	13.0	7.2
Providence	155,717	20.4	4.9
Saint Paul	270,443	10.9	5.2
Salt Lake City	163,859	14.2	7.2
San Antonio	819,021	20.9	8.9
San Francisco	691,637	13.7	4.9
San Juan	522,700	47.4	13.1*
Seattle	490,077	11.2	7.3
Trenton	92,124	21.2	7.5
Washington, D.C.	633,425	18.6	7.9
Yonkers	192,342	9.8	4.4

*Unemployment rate is for the metropolitan area.

CITY _____

TASK FORCE ON HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS
INFORMATION SHEET

Please complete the following survey and return it by April 13 to:

Lilia M. Reyes
U.S. Conference of Mayors
1620 Eye Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

A report will be published based on the responses to this survey. Experience has shown that such survey reports are more effective when they include examples of individual city data. If, however, you want your city's answers to any of the questions held confidential, please specify those questions by number: _____

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HOMELESS FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

A homeless family is defined as a unit comprised of one or two parents and at least one child which does not have its own place to live.

THE PROBLEM

1. Has the number of families requesting emergency shelter ____ increased, _____decreased or ___stayed the same in the past two years? By what percentage? _____%

2. What percentage of your city's homeless population are families? _____%

3. What percentage of the homeless families in your city are headed by:
   two parents _____%
   single parents _____ %

4. Has the number of families who are temporarily living with friends or relatives because of their inability to maintain their own home _____increased, _____decreased or ____ stayed the same in the past few years?

   Are these families considered to be at high risk of becoming homeless in the near future? _____Yes ____No. Please explain.

5. What major problems, other than lack of shelter, do homeless families in your city face (e.g., hunger and poor nutrition, unstable school attendance, lack of adequate access to health and mental health care, problems related to income assistance, unemployment, etc.)

6. Please discuss the impact that homelessness is having on the emotional and physical wellbeing of parents, children and families as a whole (e.g., family breakups, placement of children in child welfare facilities, unstable school environment, mental or health problems).

7. Please describe the conditions faced by a real or hypothetical homeless family in your city. (Give more than one example if you wish).

THE CAUSES

8. What are the main causes of the problem of homelessness among families with children in your city? (If possible, please support your answer with some data, such as information regarding AFDC caseloads, unemployment situation, housing availability.)

THE CAPACITY

9. Did the number of shelter beds available to homeless families in your city_____increase, _____decrease or _____stay the same in the past two years? By what percentage? _____%

10. Please list the type(s) of facilities (e.g., shelters, rooming houses, "welfare" hotels, etc.) in your city that provide emergency shelter to homeless families.

11. Are there facilities in your city that provide emergency shelter solely to homeless families with children?
____Yes _____No

12. Do homeless families in your city have to break up in order to be accommodated in emergency shelters? ____Yes _____No. Please explain.

13. Do emergency shelters in your city have to turn away families in need. _____Yes ____No. If yes, please indicate primary reason:
_____Lack of resources
_____Eligibility criteria (e.g. shelter serves single persons only, single mothers with children but not two-parent families, limitations on the age of children they will serve.

Please explain.

14. Please estimate the percent of the demand by families for emergency shelter which goes unmet in your city. _____ %

What happens to homeless families that cannot be accommodated in facilities that provide emergency shelter?

15. Are homeless families in your city required to leave shelter facilities at a specific time of the day? ____Yes ____No. Please explain.

16. What services or facilities are available to them during the day?

Can these services adequately meet the demand? ___Yes ___No. Please explain.

17. Do emergency shelters in your city have limitations on the period of time (i.e., days, weeks or months) families may remain in the facility? _____Yes ____No. If yes, please explain.

18. What services, other than emergency shelter, have been established in your city specifically to address problems faced by homeless families? Please indicate what percentage of the need each of these services are meeting.

19. What services specifically needed by homeless families are lacking or are not sufficiently available in your city? (Please refer, if possible, to your answer to question #5 regarding problems faced by homeless families.)

THE OUTLOOK

20. Do you expect the number of homeless families in your city to _____increase, _____decrease or _____stay the same during the next year? Please explain.

21. What are the major barriers which prevent homeless families in your city from having a permanent home once again and significantly improving their living conditions?

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Person completing form:

Name _____

Title/Agency _____

Address _____

_____

Telephone _____

TASK FORCE ON HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS

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